

VZCZCXRO6704
PP RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM
DE RUEHJA #1560/01 1570755
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 060755Z JUN 07
FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO RUEHJS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4964

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 JAKARTA 001560

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

FOR EAP/RSA, G/TIP, EAP/MTS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/06/2016
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ELAB](#) [KWMN](#) [SMIG](#) [ID](#)
SUBJECT: [TRAFFICKING](#) IN PERSONS ON THE [INDONESIAN-MALAYSIAN](#)
BORDER

REF: JAKARTA 778

Classified By: Political Officer Stanley Harsha for reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: During a recent visit to the Indonesian town of Entikong on the border with Malaysia, we observed both diligent police interdiction against trafficking in persons as well as possible complicity in corruption by immigration officials. Interviews with Indonesian police and immigration officials, traffickers, victims, and NGO workers revealed the good and bad of anti-trafficking efforts. This struggle played out as we witnessed police rescue four vulnerable children who had just returned to Indonesia without documents, led by a suspected trafficker. We noted that while human trafficking still runs rampant, traffickers and corrupt officials are now running scared from NGO watchdogs and conscientious police. We interviewed several traffickers recently put behind bars, the teenage girls they had traumatized and trafficking thugs who are allowed to perch at the immigration post. End Summary.

12. (C) Poloff traveled with staff from the Indonesian Organization for Migration (IOM) to the Indonesian town of Entikong on the Borneo border between Indonesia's West Kalimantan and Malaysia's Sarawak provinces the morning of May 8. We were searching for a group of 20 Indonesians who the Indonesian Consulate in Kuching, Sarawak informed IOM had been deported the day before, but whose whereabouts were unknown. IOM has established a system in which Malaysian authorities inform Indonesian authorities about deportations so that IOM staff can be at the immigration post when the deportees arrive, in order to screen for trafficking victims and offer protection and reintegration. This group concerned us because it included four children aged 13-17 years old. The fact that IOM received notice in Jakarta the same day as the deportation raised suspicions as they usually get more advance notice. We were scheduled to meet with the Entikong head of Immigration, Mr. Yuke, and the local head of Indonesian police, Mr. Muhammad Syafii, to inquire about this deportation and other trafficking issues.

The Corrupt Immigration Official

13. (C) IOM staff said that they suspect Yuke to be complicit in trafficking and observations during our visit also raised suspicions. The throngs of young Indonesian employment agents sitting idly in the immigration waiting room belied Yuke's claims that he had banned all employment agencies from operating at the border. Yuke explained that despite the prohibition, the men had nowhere else to go, so naturally they whiled away their idle days at the immigration office. He said he tried to shoo them away but that they kept congregating, impossible to control. "This is like Texas. Whatever is possible happens and the strongest rules," he

explained.

14. (C) Still, an order by the new reform-minded Director General of Immigration Achmad Basyir that Entikong clean out all the agents did result in improvement over the year before. Previously, IOM staff had to beat back thugs who tried to grab the young women and girls as IOM escorted them the few feet from immigration to the IOM bus. Before IOM started operating at the border two years ago, the victims would have been coerced into returning to debt bondage as soon as they crossed the border, re-trafficked to Malaysia the same day they gained freedom. IOM said an American scholar a year ago spent several weeks at Entikong documenting Indonesian immigration officials regularly telling girls to strip for a full body search so they could take photos with cell phones and transmit them to agents in Malaysia who would immediately make an offer for the girls based on the photos. With increased monitoring, at least this type of blatant exploitation has stopped, IOM said, and police now offer protection when IOM meets deportees.

15. (C) IOM's evidence of Yuke's complicity lies in the large number of rescued trafficking victims whose passports were issued at Entikong based on false documents. IOM recently turned five of those fraudulent passports over to the head of the national police's anti-trafficking in persons unit in Jakarta for further investigation. Yuke depicted himself as a humble bureaucrat of 27 years. Entikong is notorious for having issued some 14,774 passports in 2005, in a town with a population of a thousand, a phenomenon suggesting that passports are issued using falsified documents for purposes of smuggling or trafficking in persons. Asked for the number of passports issued recently, Yuke pulled out March records showing only four passports issued. Entikong now issues very

JAKARTA 00001560 002 OF 004

few passports and only to Entikong residents while Pontianak is issuing an excessive number of passports, Yuke noted. In fact, ever since Basyir called Yuke into his office in November 2006 and ordered him to clean up trafficking at the border, Yuke has not allowed any passports to be issued to women who are not native to Entikong, and young local women must bring a letter from their parents and be interviewed, he said. The Cross Border Pass (PLB) issued only to Entikong locals and allowing them to cross no more than five kilometers into Malaysia, is given only after an extensive interview during which the accent and appearance of the applicants are dead giveaways as to their origin, Yuke explained. (Note: While Entikong may be issuing fewer passports and border passes, IOM is not sure what is happening at more remote Kalimantan immigration posts such as Nunukan, which takes a couple of days of overland travel to reach. International Catholic Migration Commission estimates that approximately 100,000 travel documents were issued by the Nunukan immigration office in 2006).

16. (C) We also asked Yuke about a Mr. Augustine, who according to the head of the West Kalimantan provincial anti-trafficking police unit, Ms. Nani, is a Malaysian plantation tycoon living across the border in Sarawak who traffics young girls to his plantation for pornographic purposes. Indonesian police recently rescued a 17-year-old Pontianak girl who told them about her experience with Augustine, Nani told us, adding that he is well known to the Indonesian consulate in Kuching. Yuke admitted that he did meet Augustine once, when he visited Yuke's office, and asked for permission for a Malaysian colleague to operate out of an employment office in Entikong, the Megabuana agency. Yuke said he rebuffed Augustine, who left in a huff. Yuke's expressed lack of familiarity with Augustine was contradicted by Thea Zakaria, a medical doctor with IOM. Thea said she was with Yuke and the then-acting Indonesian Consul General at Kuching, Mr. Rubaya, in 2006 when the two talked about their next golf outing with Augustine.

How to Get a Minor Across the Border

17. (C) Around the border point, money changers and employment agents were everywhere, walking freely back and forth across the border. We struck up a conversation with two young men, asking how an American might smuggle a 17-year-old girlfriend from Jakarta to Kuching. "Dangerous," they said, the girl being underage. This response was a positive sign that the recent police crackdown on underage smuggling is having an effect. But possible, they added. First one needs to get the parents to issue a letter to the Jakarta neighborhood authorities authorizing her to move to Entikong and permission from the local authorities to relocate. With these documents, one can purchase an Entikong ID for the equivalent of about USD 150, they said. With the Entikong ID, one can then approach the head of Entikong immigration -- not his subordinates they stressed -- who for USD 300 would request that the Pontianak immigration office issue a passport, which will take three days to receive. They said it is better to go through a local agent because the head of immigration is close to them. This information seemed to explain how Entikong's passport operations have shifted to Pontianak.

Indonesian Deportees Waltz Pass Officials

18. (C) We met next with, Syafii, the 24-year-old head of local police, who hails from Solo, Central Java. Just two years out of the police academy, Syafii had recently attended an international narcotics fighting training conference and was well versed in countering human trafficking. He said police had set up a post just a few hundreds yards from the border to catch underage migrants before they crossed, and had sent back many potential trafficking victims with IOM's help. They stopped one Malaysian smuggler trying to bring six young Indonesians to Malaysia, who later made a threatening call to Syafii. One of Syafii's officers, Mr. Harsono, has been trained in anti-trafficking and has been very proactive in pursuing investigations, IOM's Kristen Dadey told us. Syafii told us that the group of 20 Indonesian deportees expected the day before never arrived.

19. (C) We ended our morning at the Anak Bangsa shelter, an NGO which IOM uses to help trafficking victims at Entikong. A staff member said she was at the immigration post the day before, along with an immigration official and two police officers, when 25 Indonesians crossed the border. The group did not go through immigration but instead walked quickly past immigration. Among them were two women, two girls and

JAKARTA 00001560 003 OF 004

two boys, huddled in the middle of older men. The group's make-up closely matched that of the deportee list. The officials questioned the group briefly on the Indonesian side. The returning migrants did not speak for themselves but rather a Mr. Mustapha spoke for them. Mustapha is known to be an employment agent who hangs around Entikong daily, oftentimes escorting groups who originate from his native South Sulawesi homeland (ethnic Bugis) across the border. IOM said the border agents tend to divide the market up by ethnicity, gaining migrants' trust through common background and dialect.

Applying Pressure

110. (C) Very concerned that the vulnerable children could be quickly trafficked back to Malaysia, we returned to the police station where we found Kassim, one of the policemen who had questioned the group. (In May 2006, under similar circumstances, a group of five underaged girls being deported with formal notification to IOM were released by Malaysian authorities just before they crossed the border and snatched immediately by traffickers, never to resurface, Thea explained.) Kassim said that Mustapha acted as the

spokesperson, saying, implausibly, that the group could only speak Buginese. Mustapha claimed that he was simply helping fellow Buginese across the border, and denied they were deportees.

¶11. (C) At that point, Yuke and Syafii walked in. A lengthy conversation ensued at which Yuke said they had no way of knowing this was the deported group since the Malaysians had dropped them off without reporting directly to Indonesian immigration officers. Besides, he explained, it is impossible for immigration officials to control the constant coming and going of persons at this crossing. We asked them to find the group quickly to avoid their being trafficked back to Malaysia. Syafii and Yuke claimed not to know where to find Mustapha but would try.

¶12. (C) We called both West Kalimantan Police Chief Anang Pratanto and national police anti-trafficking unit head Anton Charlyan asking them to help find the missing children. Charlyan called Pratanto, who called Syafii, and within an hour of our first call Syafii informed us that Mustapha had been detained at his home and that all the children and some of the other deported Indonesians were now in custody. We returned and IOM staff talked to the deportees for possible screening as trafficked persons.

¶13. (C) Yuke and police sat at police headquarters with the four children and two young women deportees, plus another Indonesian man who had crossed the border with the deportees and Mustapha. Yuke said they needed Mustapha to interpret from Buginese, but knowing that the children would almost certainly speak Indonesian, we spoke with them and they responded fluently. The officials claimed surprise to hear them speak Indonesian. IOM's Kristen Dadey, along with Thea, took the four children and the two young women into a separate room to try to get at the truth by comparing stories. Trafficking victims are commonly so brainwashed or terrorized by traffickers that they stick to the story they are told to tell until they are in a safe location and believe they have been rescued, Thea explained. Mustapha was allowed to hover around and kept whispering to the 17-year-old girl, slipping money into the girl's pocket at one point. Mustapha said the 20 deportees had spent the previous night at his home. None of the six deportees had any documents, and their stories were so contradictory that IOM decided to take the four children that night directly to the Pontianak safehouse where they could straighten out the situation in a non-threatening environment.

¶14. (C) IOM reached the children's parents by phone at a plantation in Sarawak that night, and the parents arrived in Pontianak by the next afternoon to get their children. Apparently, Malaysian authorities came to the families' homes while the parents were out working and detained the four children for three weeks before deporting them, the children related to us. The parents were possibly trying to arrange for the children to be smuggled back to them in Malaysia but Mustapha's role remained murky. IOM believed that in Mustapha's hands, the children would have been highly vulnerable to being trafficked. There was no evidence that the children had been trafficked although the 14-year-old boy told us that he had worked alongside his father on the plantation since age eleven. The parents told IOM when they came to pick up the children that they had saved enough money to return to their homeland and start businesses.

JAKARTA 00001560 004 OF 004

Traffickers Interviewed from Behind Bars

¶15. (C), In Pontianak, Police Officer Nani took us to a prison to interview four convicted traffickers. Nani showed us a list of 37 cases with a number of convictions over the past few months, data that was not reflected in Post's TIP report. In fact, we knew nothing of the four convicted

traffickers we met in Pontianak. Nani leads a team of four anti-trafficking police.

¶16. (C) Sixty-two-year old Amin was serving a three-year sentence for falsifying documents. He told us that he was only guilty of agreeing to a father's request to accompany his 16-year-old daughter to Malaysia to find work, and helping her to get a passport which falsified her age to 22. An hour later we interviewed the trafficked girl, now 17. Amin had promised the family that she would work in a restaurant or as a maid in Kuching but instead sold her into prostitution. When the father found out he was furious, the girl told counselors. Both she and father testified against Amin.

¶17. (C) Middle aged Nelly had trafficked many girls aged between 14 and 16 and finally was convicted of document falsification, Nani told us. Nelly told us she falsified documents only for girls aged over 18, complaining that she only made about USD 45 on the transaction for which she was convicted, after she had paid the employment agency and the Malaysian broker about USD150 to help traffic the girl. Another victim we interviewed was trafficked at age 16 as a maid in Kuching, receiving no salary and being sold to different households every two months. When an agent tried to sell her to a karaoke bar this girl knew she would be forced into prostitution and managed to flee to the border, but was arrested by Malaysian police because she was undocumented. She spent six months in prison before being deported. She said there were more than 50 underage girls in the detention center at the time, and many other boys. One girl was only six years old. West Kalimantan police officials said boys can also be caned up to five times in these detention centers, just for being undocumented, prior to being deported.

¶18. (C) Ms. Aye, who appeared to be about 25 or 30 years of age, was also convicted of document fraud, and was working in partnership with her Malaysian husband in Kuching to traffic girls and women. She shot daggers at us as she sat down to talk with us, asking immediately if we worked for IOM. "I hate IOM. They gather us up and get us arrested. I want to meet the people from IOM," she said. We told them that we were from the U.S. Embassy, although IOM's Kristin Dadey was with us and kept quiet. Other IOM staff recognized Aye and kept their distance, afraid they would be identified and threatened.

¶19. (C) Comment: Our visit to the Indonesian side of the Indonesian-Malaysian border area illustrated the scope and brutality of the trafficking problem as well as tremendous strides made in just the past few months to eradicate it. Certainly, USG-funded training of police, prosecutors and judges has made a major impact, proven from our first hand encounters with both the traffickers behind bars and their victims at safehouses. Even the police in Entikong, officers assigned to what is probably the worst possible posting for rookies, knew about trafficking and were trying to interdict under trying circumstances. They seemed genuinely upset that the group of deportees had slipped through and gave IOM full freedom to interview and rescue the children, and also interrogated Mustapha sharply in our presence. It came as no surprise that immigration officials remained deeply complicit in trafficking, and we can only hope that as reports of corruption by officials like Yuke get back to anti-trafficking investigators and the director general of immigration that examples will be set, as they have been with other officials. This Mission will do all it can to make sure such officials are culled from positions of authority.

HEFFERN